Gentlewomen Adventurers

in

Death Valley

by Walt Wheelock

Keepsake Number 26

Published *for the* 37th Annual Death Valley '49ers Encampment

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COVER PHOTO: Dr. Margaret Long in Death Valley.
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GENTLEWOMEN ADVENTURERS
in
DEATH VALLEY

There seems to be no limit to the number of books written about Death Valley and the '49ers. So many in fact, that E. I. Edwards wrote a half dozen books[1] devoted to the bibliography of these works. In these many volumes, the space devoted to the four female 'forty-niners is relatively brief, with exceptions. Primarily of Juliet Brier, who appears frequently in the literature, and of Sarah Bennett, well represented in William Lewis Manly's *Death Valley in '49*. Indeed, Manly wrote so warmly of Mrs. Bennett that some writers who look for a bit of scandal have suggested a possible romance. However there has not been a bit of information to support such literary trash.

Some mention is made of the Bennetts' young daughters, Melissa and Martha. But little has been written about Mary Wade and her daughter, Almira. Even less about Mrs. Arcan[e]. Even such exacting writers as Carl I. Wheat and T. S. Palmer, in their excellent listings, fail to note her given name (Abigail Harriett).

Even scarcer have been books written by women about this historic period of the Old West. Only three come to mind: Louise Amelia Clappe's *Dame Shirley Letters*, Sarah Royce's *A Frontier Lady*, and Martha Summerhayes' *Vanished Arizona*. The first two tell of life in the Diggings, and the third spells out the life of an army wife in southwestern Arizona. Later writings should include Mary Austin's *Land of Little Rain*, since it was this book that lured one of our subjects, Dr. Margaret Long, into her many years of research on Death Valley and the '49ers.

So with this barren background, it was most unlikely that two

[1] *Desert Voices* (1958) and *The Enduring Desert* (1969) to name but two.

women, each with a female companion, would travel into the region just after the start of the 1900s to a place and at a time when women just didn't do such adventuring. And each would write and publish a volume on her experiences!

* * * * *

These two lived a different life from one another. The first, Edna Brush Perkins, spent a weekend in the lower Valley, then returned for a month-long jaunt in 1921 with her friend, Charlotte Jordan, and a packer in a "grocery wagon" into the heart of Death Valley, before returning. Her book was published in 1922, a score of years before Dr. Long's publication.

Mrs. Perkins made a trip to the southwest, perhaps in early 1900. She had read a book on the Great American Deserts, and learned there were many deserts in the southwest of her country as well as the Sonoran and the Chihuahuan south of the border. It was the Mojave Desert that intrigued her, especially The White Heart of Mojave, a name she applied to Death Valley and her work.

Perkins found it almost impossible (for her) to find an entry to the Valley. Querying the Auto Club, she was misdirected south to San Diego, and over the mountains to Imperial Valley. But this was the Colorado Desert, and she returned to express her displeasure to the Auto Club. They now came up with a map of the area she wished to visit. Unfortunately, the Auto Club had taken an excellent U.S.G.S. Water-Supply Paper map as its base and superimposed new roads and lettering that were to confuse Perkins. They managed to reach Silver Lake and were guided into the south end of the Valley at Saratoga Springs. There the trace ended and summer heat was on; they headed east. They returned in midwinter and hiring a packer and a wagon at Beatty, crossed the Funeral Range to spend an exciting month in what was to become the Death Valley National Monument. She returned to Ohio and in time, to her publisher.

She was not an analytical observer, and such things as dates and mileages are not in her book. Edna enjoyed the sights, sounds and even smells of the region, and descriptions of light, shadow,

and colors fill much of her writing. E. I. Edwards, the dean of desert bibliographers, wrote: "The author, in her excursive ramblings, appears primarily concerned with relatively trivial experiences and impressions of her own group and does not choose to confine her effort to an intimate study of the desert. There is so much she could have told us, back in 1922; so much, indeed, that I should now like to read in her book. Yet I search in vain for an early account of Death Valley's intriguing history, of its flora and fauna, its geology, its borax industry, its mining industry."

On the other hand, *Outlook* (Dec. 1922) wrote, "Full of the atmosphere of the real desert. The account of the difficulties that beset travellers in reaching their goal is entertaining and at times humorous, and the descriptions of desert scenery are unusually good."

By reading, with her work in one hand and the Mendenhall map in the other, together with knowledge gained in years of exploring Death Valley, it is possible to trace her routes.

Dr. Long, who considered herself a rival in early Death Valley travel graciously wrote, "The Perkins' charming little poems in prose catch the elusive spirit of the desert and portray admirably the sense of its mystery and power." Many readers will echo Dr. Long's thought.

Our second author happily told it as Edwards had wished. He wrote: "Dr. Long has put together a carefully-written and authentic account of Death Valley, coupled with intelligent exploratory findings of the physical routes traversed by the emigrants of 1849—from Salt Lake, across Nevada, and thence to the Coast. The Doctor's book has not sustained itself by a parasitic nourishment upon the research of others. Here is a vigorous, first-hand contribution to Death Valley literature; one of the best in my opinion, that has ever been made available. I would rate it among the first half-dozen Death Valley items of paramount importance."

Margaret Long was born in Boston, and studied at Smith College; later earned her M.D. degree from the medical school of Johns Hopkins University. She served as a nurse in the Spanish-American War and on the staffs of several large Eastern hospitals.

For many years, Dr. Long practiced medicine in Denver, Colorado. During the years of 1921 to 1950 she made frequent trips to the Death Valley region, tracing the '49ers' route from Fort Independence, through Death Valley to the Coast, always taking careful and complete notes. She was a scientist, not a casual scribbler! Her papers are now in the Margaret Long Collection at the University of Colorado.

Dr. Long's companion, Anne Martin, had first been in Rhyolite in 1912 while campaigning for Woman's Suffrage. She returned to Beatty in 1918 with Long while campaigning for a seat in the U.S. Senate. Three years later, they returned to make their first journey into Death Valley.

Leaving Beatty late in the afternoon of Oct. 27, 1921, they camped that night near Rhyolite. The next morning they drove into the Valley and arrived at Furnace Creek Ranch for a short visit before driving a ways up Furnace Creek Wash for a lunch stop. That afternoon they visited the borax mine at Ryan, then returned to camp that night two miles south of the Ranch. The next morning, they travelled back up Boundary Canyon, lunching at Daylight Spring before returning to Beatty. Hence Long's first trip was less than 48 hours, compared with Perkins' month-long jaunt. But Long-Martin were to return many times, while Perkins-Jordan vanished from the scene.

In 1925, Long and Martin picked up the Old Oregon Trail at Fort Independence, traced it to Salt Lake, there transferred to the Old Spanish Trail on which they continued westward until they reached Cal-127. This carried them north to Shoshone and then on to Death Valley.

Returning in 1928, Long began the first of a series of journeys into the backcountry, to trace the '49ers route from Pahranagat in eastern Nevada to Death Valley and beyond. As contrasted to Perkins, Long read and studied all possible material on the '49ers and Death Valley, and much of her work appears in *The Shadow of the Arrow* (an Indian legend tells that only he who can sleep in the shadow of his arrows stuck in the ground should attempt to enter the Valley.) For this, she truly deserves Edwards' accolade.

The Shadow of the Arrow is more than a guide or road log. Included are accounts of both the Old Oregon and Old Spanish Trails, the Walker Pass Cutoff (which led the '49ers astray), and an account of Manly's rescue trip to the Spanish settlements and his return with supplies for the beleaguered Argonauts. She was entranced with Juliet Brier's story and writes in detail on Juliet.

Long's book was published in 1941 but other researchers found minor variations in the passing years, so in 1950, she produced a "Revised and Enlarged Edition" which is unfortunately flawed by subsequent misinformation. Both editions are now out-of-print and are to be found only in antiquarian catalogues or by chance in a used book store.

Nevertheless, it does deserve to be called "One of the best . . . that has ever been made available!"

* * * * *

The *White Heart of Mojave*

As we have mentioned, on her return to Los Angeles, Perkins was given an Auto Club map which showed several roads leading into Death Valley. Some of these were drawn in heavy lines similar to the main Southern California highways. In addition, there were a number of towns printed in the same heavy type as Los Angeles, Pasadena and San Bernardino. So she and her companion were sure that the trip would present no difficulty but they were to find that they had been badly misled.

In 1909, *Water-Supply Paper 224*[2] was printed and it was accompanied by an excellent map showing springs, wells, and other watering places in the desert. All roads and towns had been lettered with fine lines. In 1914 (and 1917, 1918), the Auto Club had taken

[2] U.S.G.S. Water-Supply Paper 224. *Some Desert Watering Places in Southeastern California and Southwestern Nevada* by Walter C. Mendenhall. (GPO) Washington, 1909.

this map and superimposed roads from their records. A number of towns were relettered with these same sized lines with Silver Lake, Randsburg, and others looking like major places of habitation, with the road over Wingate Pass looking as well-built as the highway from Los Angeles to Pasadena.

With this Auto Club map Perkins was now sure of herself. She wrote:

> It was an inspiring map covered with a network of black roads and many towns in bold type. We studied it and found that we could never get more than thirty miles from somewhere, and we thought we could walk that if we had to. For some reason no one told us to beware of abandoned towns and abandoned roads, perhaps they (the ACSC) did not know about them.

After servicing their car, loading on extra fuel, oil, water and food, Edna and Charlotte were off on their great adventure, apparently the first to be made by two lone women! In Barstow they met a druggist who turned out to be a true Death Valley buff. He showed them pictures of the Devil's Playground, where the sand dunes roll along with the wind. He was wary of their proposed route, now known as I-15 and Cal-127. "He said the road was so seldom traveled that in places it was obliterated. We would surely get lost. Silver Lake, the next town on it, was 87 miles away. There was but one ranch on the road, but he was not sure anyone was living there." So they decided to go to Randsburg and then to Ballarat and try to get to Death Valley from there.

Randsburg, Atolia and Johannesburg are mining towns close together about forty miles north of Barstow. Perkins wrote:

> The road to there was no such highway as we had been traveling upon; often it was only two ruts among the sagebrush, but it was well enough marked to follow easily. . . . Johannesburg, just over the crest, had six buildings, among them an adobe hotel and a large garage. All three towns ornamented the map with big black letters. We thought we were approaching cities and found instead little wooden houses set on the sand with the great simplicity of the desert at their doors.

The natives of Joburg [as the town is still commonly called] were startled.

> They described the Panamint Mountains which shut off that side of the valley with a barrier nearly 12,000 feet high. There were only two passes, including the Wingate Pass through which borax used to be hauled and now blocked with fallen rocks, and a pass up by Ballarat. They had not heard of any cars going in for some time.

They found a real old-timer, Shady Myrick. He told them, "If you go there, you will see something that you'll never see anywhere else in the world." He said that by Silver Lake would be the way to go.

> There was sort of a road all the way. He drew a map on the sand and said we could not possibly miss it for a truck had come over six weeks before and they could follow its tracks.

After loafing around Joburg, visiting and getting their car in the best possible condition, they located two young miners who were going to Silver Lake and would be glad to have the women follow them. They were driving a decrepit Ford pickup and had doubts about Perkins' heavy car, but would try to get them through. Unfortunately, her report tells little of the trip, other than that the drive was wild and fearful and wonderful. However, the Mendenhall map shows their route, via Blackwater Well, Granite Wells, Leach Springs, Avawatz Mtns., and finally Silver Lake. The map distances add up to 99.3 miles, but it is quite possible that road changes would account for the estimate of 116 miles. It was a long rough trip; and once the Model T became stuck and Perkins' big car pulled it out. The sun had long set before they finally reached Silver Lake.

A kindly German couple, the Brauers, received them and provided a one-room shack. When the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad was put through here in 1906, Silver Lake had been a bustling place. Of the 24 station stops, Silver Lake was one of the six that rated a full-time station agent complete with telegraph communications. The late Capt. Ray Gibson, a long-time member of

the Death Valley '49ers, had served a hitch here as a station agent.

After several days in Silver Lake, they were advised to follow the Tonopah and Tidewater RR to Death Valley Junction, then attempt to reach the Valley from that point.

> During the debate the sheriff of Silver Lake [Julius Meyer], a silent person decorated with pistols, volunteered to go with us beyond the Avawatz as far as Saratoga Springs, and as much farther as we could drive the car. He would promise nothing as he had not been there for some time. . . .
>
> That day's excursion proved even more memorable than the drive from Joburg. It was a continuation of it, becoming ever wilder and stranger. . . . Ever since leaving Barstow we had felt that we were advancing through progressive suggestion toward some kind of a climax. Mojave was leading us on to something. Her heart still lay beyond.
>
> A good enough track led north along the railroad for a few miles and then swung around the base of the Avawatz. We drove up an interminable mesa where the alleged road grew always rougher and less well-marked, and the engine had an annoying tendency to boil. . . . The road became so unspeakable that the Sheriff advised leaving it for the white, unbroken sand of a wash. For miles we made our own track, winding around stones and islands of brush.

Finally, after this long drive [31.4 miles by a contemporary ACSC map], they reached their goal.

> Saratoga Springs is a blue pool with green rushes growing around it, in an angle of a dark mountain. The water bubbled up from the bottom of the little pool. . . . Though this real lake in the desert was a pure and lovely blue, and dazzling bright, it had none of the magicalness of the dream water. . . . Somehow it just missed enchantment. Henceforth we were able to distinguish mirage by the indescribable quality. . . .
>
> We attempted to drive beyond Saratoga Springs. There was supposed to be a road, but neither Charlotte nor I could discern it. We bumped along over ground so cut by shallow water-channels that after about seven miles

we dared not proceed, for a wrecked car in that shining desolation would stay forever where smashed. . . .

They returned to Silver Lake.

By now Perkins had made up her mind, writing:

> Death Valley was the goal, but after the day at Saratoga Springs, one thing was certain: no matter if we could get there in an automobile—and various expedients were suggested to make it possible, even safe—not thus would we enter the White Heart, not with the throbbing of an engine nor dependent on gasoline, not limited in time, not thwarted by roads. When we went it would be slowly, quietly, camping by the springs, making fires of the brush, sleeping under the open sky, listening, watching. . . . If the White Heart was the climax of the Mojave we felt that it must be a climax of the feel of the outdoors, one of its supreme expressions. We were going on a pilgrimage to that!
>
> We talked to the Sheriff about it . . . we had no hesitation in asking him to be our guide. He said it was a mad idea. Nobody ever went to Death Valley unless they expected to get something out of it. "We are just like the rest of them," we told him. "We expect to get something out of it, but we can't get it in a Ford."
>
> He finally agreed to go if we would take a wagon.

By now, the early summer heat was beating down, and the two women knew that their pilgrimage would have to be postponed until the following winter. They returned to a familiar, dear New England landscape, where the two would take blankets to a lonely part of a beach and spend the night there. Never before had they slept outdoors on the ground under the stars. Knowing the Mojave a little had made them feel it might be worth while. They did indeed find that it was.

* * * * *

Into the White Heart

☘

In December, 1920, they wrote the Sheriff. This return telegram came: "O.K., Julius Meyer."

This time Edna and Charlotte drove their big car directly from

Barstow to Silver Lake. The Sheriff had procured a wagon to be drawn by a horse and a mule to start from Beatty, a hundred miles farther north. Abandoning their car, they travelled up to Beatty on a Tonopah & Tidewater RR mixed train. The single Pullman was booked solid, so our party rode up to Beatty in the caboose, much to the pleasure of the women.

> At Beatty we first encountered Molly and Bill. Molly was a white mule and Bill a big, thin, red horse. . . . Moreover, it did not seem possible that the frail-looking wagon could carry the supplies and the camping equipment. We had purchased food for a month. It was both heavy and bulky; bacon, ham, potatoes, flour, canned milk and vegetables, four pounds of butter and six dozen eggs. . . . In addition there was a bail of hay and a bag of grain, and three five-gallon gasoline cans for carrying water. Three beds, the duffle bags and Charlotte's sketch-box were still to be loaded. "It can't be done!" we told the Sheriff. He replied "You stop worrying. Nobody in this outfit is to worry except me. It's what I'm for." . . . and from that moment became the Official Worrier.

After two days, the party was ready to start for Death Valley. Almost all of Beatty gathered to watch them start, shouting "Good Luck", though quietly expecting them to return shortly. They headed for Rhyolite, now a deserted ghost town. After passing through the ruins, they headed down a long straight road for Daylight Pass, a ten-mile journey. It looked so close but it was night before they reached Daylight Spring. Now they knew why The Worrier had insisted on them bringing along heavy clothing.

As the sun arose, little patches of snow melted and the air became warm. It was to be eight miles downhill to the rim of Death Valley, near Corkscrew Peak, three thousand feet above the valley floor. "Well," Julius said brusquely, "that's her!"

Their destination was an abandoned gold-mine, the Keane Wonder. It looked level from their viewpoint, but it was a long stiff two-hour climb away. The mine was a large plant which had paid well. A mess of buildings, some half-blown-down, pieces of machinery and the big red mill huddled at the mouth of the canyon

where the mountain rises steeply from the mesa. Camp was made here for three days, while all enjoyed views up and down the valley as well as across to the snow-capped Panamints. While they were there, a storm swept down and across that high range, and they watched, hardly believing that rain and snow storms could so closely encroach on Death Valley.

On the fourth day they left for the palm-rimmed Furnace Creek Ranch, established to supply the Twenty-Mule Team Borax Works. At noon they reached a road that led to Salt Creek and skirted the swamp of the Amargosa River, which filled the whole bottom of the valley. Turning left, winding around a hill, they came to the ruins of Harmony Borax Works. Only a few roofless stone cabins and a row of vats remained. They spent the night near an Indian encampment.

> The water rushed down the ditch, [at Furnace Creek] clear and cool. How marvelous this running water seemed! How marvelous to dip out all we wanted to wash ourselves and our clothes and our dishes!
>
> Our felicity, however, was short lived. The Panamint Indians . . . do not count cleanliness among their virtues. The rising of the fierce, hot sun brought millions of flies which converted our dishes and camp equipment in black masses that crawled. . . . We spent most of the forenoon moving a mile or two away among the mesquites.

The superintendent, a vigorous silent Scotchman, told them the valley takes its toll. Most white men cannot live here long. He had been at the ranch eight years, and thought he could remain, but no one else had ever stayed such a length of time.

> One night we camped a little way up the canyon behind the ranch in the vain hope of finding a cooler spot. . . . Being shut up in a canyon was no part of our plan and we made the Worrier help us lug our beds quite a way from camp to the top of a little hill overlooking at least part of the valley.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Every day that we stayed in Death Valley seemed more awful than the last. From ten o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon we existed in a blind torpor. . . . At

> noon we always planned to leave immediately, we panted to escape; then the enchantment would begin and we would forget our plans. . . . We only knew that the mantle of snow on the peaks of the Panamints, so serene above the quivering heat of the valley, was the most desirable thing on earth.

They returned to the Ranch, and stocked up with hay and drinking water, as there wouldn't be any good water before Emigrant Springs, some 50 miles away, a journey that would take the better part of four days. Two camps would be "bad water" stops, at Cow Creek and Salt Creek, where only animals would drink. The third would be a dry camp.

Leaving the ranch rather late on the same day, they passed the old borax-works, winding around a sulphur-colored hill to a little green spot on Cow Creek, two miles from the road. The next morning, arising at dawn, they hastened to leave during cooler hours. By noon, the animals refused to continue, and a lunch break was called to let them recruit from the 105° heat.

After an hour they continued, then took a two-hour break in a mesquite grove, staying there until the sun dipped behind Tucki Mtn. Now crossing a little range, they made camp at Salt Creek, where they had to dig for water. While they drew on the Furnace Creek water, Molly and Bill had to drink the loathsome stuff from Salt Creek. However they seemed pleased with the coarse green grass.

The next morning they were underway, floundering across the swamp. Avoiding the usual road along the edge of the marsh, they kept near the base of Tucki, beginning the ascent of the mesa after passing a benchmark that indicated sea-level. Hour after hour they struggled up the bajada. A sign was found that read "Water Eight Miles", but it might as well have been 50 miles, considering the condition of the travellers and their beasts. A dry camp was in order.

The next day's climb was easier, for by the time the sun reached its full vigor, they had reached an altitude where the air was cool, and tinglingly crisp. At three o'clock, they came unexpectedly upon a little spring, a true mountain spring. They drank and drank. The unhitched animals broke away and raced for the water,

—SAGEBRUSH PRESS COLLECTION

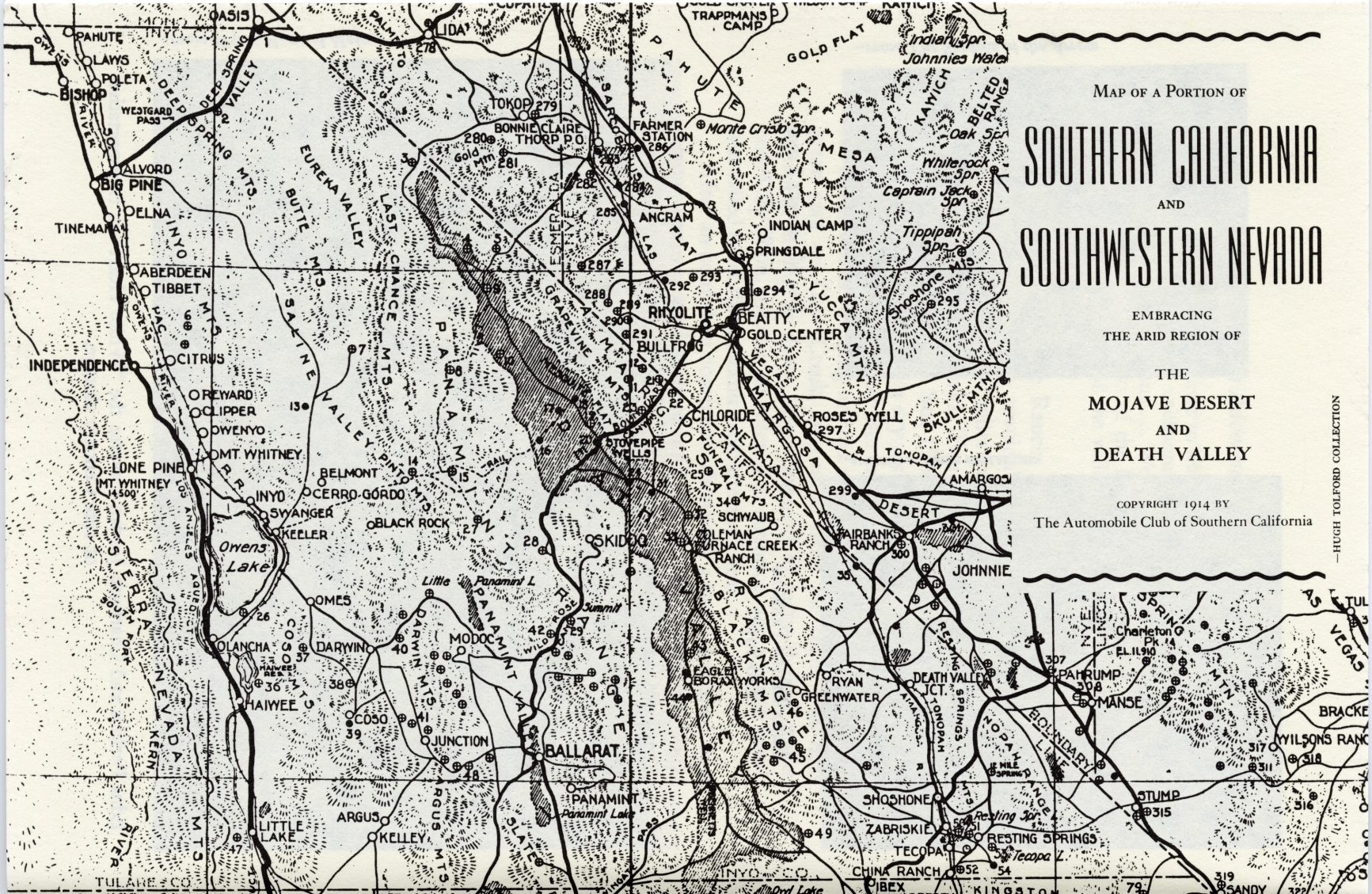
EDNA BRUSH PERKINS
1880-1930

—FROM *The Shadow of the Arrow*

DR. MARGARET LONG
1873-1957

—FROM *White Heart of Mojave*

Edna Perkins and Charlotte Jordan traverse the "White Heart" in transportation of 19th Century vintage.


MAP OF A PORTION OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
AND
SOUTHWESTERN NEVADA
EMBRACING
THE ARID REGION OF
THE
MOJAVE DESERT
AND
DEATH VALLEY
COPYRIGHT 1914 BY
The Automobile Club of Southern California
—HUGH TOLFORD COLLECTION
OASIS
LIDA
TRAPPMANS CAMP
GOLD FLAT
Indian Spr.
Johnnies Water
PAHUTE
LAWS
POLETA
BISHOP
DEEP SPRING VALLEY
DEEP SPRING MTS.
WESTGARD PASS
TOKOP
BONNIE CLAIRE
THORP P.O.
FARMER STATION
Monte Cristo Spr.
KAWICH
BELTED RANGE
Oak Spr.
Whiterock Spr.
Ceptain Jack Spr.
ALVORD
BIG PINE
ELNA
TINEMAHA
EUREKA VALLEY
BUTTE MTS.
LAST CHANCE MTS.
ANCRAM
INDIAN CAMP
SPRINGDALE
Tippipah Spr.
ABERDEEN
TIBBET
INDEPENDENCE
CITRUS
REWARD
CLIPPER
OWENYO
MT. WHITNEY
LONE PINE
MT. WHITNEY 14500
SALINE VALLEY
PANAMINT MTS.
RHYOLITE
BEATTY
GOLD CENTER
BULLFROG
Shoshone Spr.
YUCCA MTN.
AMARGOSA
CHLORIDE
ROSES WELL
SKULL MTN.
TONOPAH
AMARGOSA DESERT
BELMONT
CERRO GORDO
INYO
SWANGER
KEELER
BLACK ROCK
STOVEPIPE WELLS
SCHWAUB
FAIRBANKS RANCH
COLEMAN
FURNACE CREEK RANCH
JOHNNIE
SIERRA NEVADA
Owens Lake
SKIDOO
NORTH BLACK MTS.
Little Panamint L.
Panamint Summit
OMES
OLANCHA
DARWIN
MODOC
EAGLE BORAX WORKS
RYAN
GREENWATER
DEATH VALLEY JCT
TONOPAH & SPRINGS
RESTING SPRINGS
PAHRUMP
MANSE
Charleston Pk. 14
El. 11,910
BRACKE
WILSONS RANC
HAIWEE
HAIWEE RES.
COSO MTS.
COSO
JUNCTION
BALLARAT
PANAMINT
Panamint Lake
SHOSHONE
ZABRISKIE
TECOPA
Tecopa L.
CHINA RANCH
IBEX
STUMP
SANDY
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LITTLE LAKE
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Langford L.
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Soda Lake
SODA LAKE
Cronese L.
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DEVILS PLAYGROUND
BERRYO
TOLTEC
RIGGS
CRACKERJACK
Silurian L.
Avawatz L.
AVAWATZ MTS
Leach L.
SPERRY
SARATOGA SPR.
DUMONT
SILURIAN
DEATH VALLEY
Mesquite L.
CLARK MTN
STATE LINE PASS
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ROSALIE
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Ivanpah
IVANPAH
LEASTALK
HANLON
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CHASE
ELORA
AMES
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BLACKB
VALLEY WELL
SCOTT
DUNN
FIELD
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CRUCERO
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BORATE
MANIX
HARVARD
CAMP CADY
CADY MTS
MESQUITE
KOUNS
COTIJO
DAGGETT
NEWBERRY
TROY
HECTOR
PISGAH
LAVIC
LUDLOW
OLD DAD MTS
BROADWELL
PROVIDENCE MTS
CLIPPER MTN
DANBY
KLONDIKE
SIAM
CADIZ
BAGDAD
AMBOY
NOME
STEDMAN
BULLION MTS
SHEEP HOLE MTS
Dale Dry L.
DALE
SAN BERNARDINO
RIVERSIDE
CO
MINNEOLA
COTTONWOOD
MOJAVE RIVER
HELEN
STODDARD WELL
ORO GRANDE
NEWBERRY MTN
KANE MTN
BESSEMER MTN
ORD MTN
BOX S RANCH
Rabbit Lake
Negro Butte
Means L.
Mesquite L.
Bonanza Lake
VICTORVILLE
Victor Lakes
ALMONDALE
LLANO
PALMDALE
WEST PALMDALE
LANCASTER
DEL SUR
ROSAMOND
Rosamond L.
Three Sisters L.
RODRIGUEZ LAKE
MUROC
GLOSTER
LOW SPRINGS
AIRMONT
SAUGUS
CANYON
ACTON
VINCENT
HAROLD
LITTLE ROCK
SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS
SAN FERNANDO
BURBANK
GLENDALE
PASADENA
TROPICO
MONROVIA
DUARTE
AZUSA
GLENDORA
LORDSBURG
CLAREMONT
UPLAND
CUCAMONGA
DEVORE
Cajon Pass
CAJON
SUMMIT
HESPERIA
CACTUS FLAT
Bear Lake
SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS
HIGHLAND
SAN BERNARDINO
REDLANDS
COLTON
LOMA
EL MONTE
COVINA
BASSET
PUENTE
LOS ANGELES
Morongo Pass
HEAVY BARS
KERN CO
SAN BERNARDINO CO
LOS ANGELES CO

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The automobile used on one of the many Death Valley journeys by Dr. Margaret Long and Anne Martin. It is pictured here, near Furnace Creek in 1921, with burros left by earlier-day prospectors.

drinking until the last drop was gone. Emigrant Springs was but a mile farther on, and only a few miles from the big abandoned mining camp of Skidoo. The Springs were to be their base for trips to Skidoo, Pinto Peak, Wildrose Canyon, and for an attempt to scale Telescope Peak.

> All around Emigrant Springs are mountains from five to seven thousand feet high. . . .
>
> One day was devoted to a climb up to the abandoned mines at Skidoo, at an elevation of about 6,000 feet. A trail started up from Emigrant Springs, but it looked very steep, so we went a longer way around, intending to come down it. . . . We passed little patches of snow in the shadows of the rocks. The sky was a deep blue all day and the air cold with a sting to it.

From there, the group traversed to an outlook, now named Aguereberry Point. From here they had a commanding view of the Valley 7,000 feet below. But night was closing in, and when they reached Skidoo again, they were unable to locate the steep trail down to the Springs. More time was spent skirting the various ridges, but it was some four hours later before they reached camp, chilled to the bone.

Another day from Emigrant Springs was spent in climbing Pinto Peak, five miles to the southwest. They chose it because it was the highest point anywhere around, and they hoped for a good look at Mt. Baldy and Telescope Peak. At between six and seven thousand feet the trees appear. Not until they reached the summit did a view open up. It appeared suddenly, black mass after black mass of harsh mountains leading over to Mt. Whitney, serene and white on the wall of the Sierra. The Sierra Nevada is the barrier of the desert. Beyond that glistening wall lie the lovely and fertile valleys of California.

During the week that they camped at Emigrant Springs they saw no wild-life except a few brown birds that made a happy twittering in the mornings. Sometimes in the blue night the distant howlings of coyotes could be heard. Every day they climbed one or another of the ridges and smaller mountains close to the spring.

But now came the time to move to their next camp, Wildrose

Canyon. The canyon, named after a clump of rose bushes near its mouth, is very narrow with precipitous sides. A considerable stream, bordered with feathery trees, flows through the lower end of Wildrose Canyon. As soon as possible, they pushed on up to the canyon which widened into what looked like a plain surrounded by mountains. Mt. Baldy loomed as a great white mass, cutting off any view of Telescope Peak. They had thought that they would see the deserted charcoal kilns and thus find the spring of which passing cattlemen had told them, but there were no signs of the spring.

A racing cloud deposited snow on the northern hills which before had been bare. Moreover Wildrose Canyon was at an altitude where the cold at that time of the year was intense. "Desert Rat" Julius became a bundle of misery! They moved the wagon to an old shack in a cluster of cedars, turning their stock loose to find their way back to the springs below. The area had plenty of wood, and the Worrier kept himself warm chopping and carrying.

The next morning the white dawn of a clear day filtered through the blue wilderness, and they started on that long anticipated adventure. It began with a stiff scramble up a buttressing ridge. Soon snow was reached, so hard that steps had to be dug in with their hobnailed shoes. In about two hours the top of the ridge was reached. Suddenly they stood on top, looking over an immense white amphitheater shut in by snowy peaks, with the pyramid of Telescope visible on the far side. They pressed on toward Baldy which proved to be much steeper than it had looked.

Noon brought the trio to a little saddle north of Baldy. With great eagerness they panted up that last few yards! Here at last they reached a point from which they could see the highest and lowest points of the states. From the summit of Baldy the long curving arête led over to Telescope. When the arête began to rise, it rapidly became very steep. The only possible way to the peak was up a sharp knife-edge, from which both sides fell sheer for thousands of feet. They were only a few hundred feet from the summit, but without an ice ax and a rope. The Worrier hated to be beat. However, there was no sense in going on.

Some years later [1966] a climber fell to his death from this same icy ridge. To compound the tragedy, when the China Lake Search and Rescue Team arrived on the scene one of their members likewise fell to his death.

While the Worrier was feeling that "the ladies should not be extended," little did he know that Edna Perkins had successfully scaled the Jungfrau in Switzerland, but—of course—using an ice ax, ropes, and the aid of professional guides!

The descent was easy except for the heart-breaking pull up Mt. Baldy again. On the summit they made concessions to their aching bodies, taking a long rest and eating what was left of bread, cheese and prunes. When the sun stood just above the wall of the Sierra, they continued the long descent. Night came while they were still going down, and the basin of Wildrose Canyon was a violet lake. Breakfast was late the next morning, like Sunday breakfast at home. Shortly after noon they struck out in an attempt to find the missing charcoal-kilns. Finding the remains of an old road, they followed it for nearly a mile; then right there stood ten immense charcoal-kilns like a row of beehives. They were so big that they could walk upright through the doors. Behind the kilns a dim path led to a little, secret spring. Here should have been the place for their camp.

That night the dreaded storm crept over the mountains. At dawn big wet flakes gently sifting through the still air woke them. During the day the storm increased. That night they attempted to sleep in a flimsy waterproof silk tent, which the wind tore asunder. The next day the Worrier could not retrieve Molly and Bill until four o'clock and the storm showed no signs of abating. Hastily packing they left the Camp-in-the-Cedars. During the remainder of the day and throughout the night heavy clouds occasionally dropped flurries of snow on them.

When they reached the shack at the canyon's mouth it seemed palatial. The next day the storm continued, with clear intervals, during which they rushed out to attempt to dry their clothes and blankets.

> Wild Rose Canyon was the farthest point of our journey; from the old shack the going home began. . . . As soon

> as we had left the narrow canyon and could once more see the expanse of the sky, we knew the storm was by no means over. . . . Toward noon the clouds made a concerted attack on the sun, calling up new cohorts until they at last succeeded in covering him entirely . . . Then a great change fell upon Mojave. She became forlorn, her bright colors faded to grey.

Passing a high plateau known as Harrisburg Flat, it became a white, whirling fury. All day the icy wind had been pressing upon them, now it was so cold that they felt they could not withstand it long. Every bit of energy they had was centered on reaching the ruined shack at Emigrant Springs, only to find smoke curling from the chimney and an old-timer sitting by the fire. Of course, he offered to vacate the hut, and of course they refused. The next morning he sent over a pan of hot biscuits, a most welcome and delicious gift.

The wind continued to blow with violence for several days, but they braved its fury, down past what is now known as the Devil's Cornfield to camp out of its fury, near Salt Creek. Again the wind picked up and they soon had to fight a sandstorm, rather than a snowstorm. The storm abated a little and the Worrier suggested that they climb a neighboring sand dune to see a real sandstorm. They did so.

The next morning the trio climbed the dunes again and went on to Salt Creek, where the rest of the day was spent. Fortunately, with improving weather, the trip up through Daylight Pass and down to Beatty seemed but routine.

> It was April when we returned to Silver Lake. Spring was walking on the desert. The sand and stony mesas were decked with flowers. Great patches of California-poppies bent in hairlike, invisible stems before the wind, little floating golden cups. Blue lupins, like spires of larkspur, glistened in the sun.

Several days were spent here, enjoying the warmth and color of the desert spring. Then they piled their baggage into the automobile and through a whole sunny day drove away from the White Heart of Mojave.

Returning to Ohio, Perkins again was soon on the road, and three years later, after a caravan trip to the Sahara, returned to Cleveland to study painting. She was acquiring a high reputation in this field, when she met with an untimely death at the age of 50, just a short eight years after her adventures in *The White Heart of Mojave*. Edna Brush Perkins was truly a "Renaissance Woman."

Edna Brush Perkins

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Edna Perkins was born in Cleveland, Ohio, March 25, 1880. Her father was a distinguished chemist, physicist and an electrical engineer. She attended the Hathaway-Brown school in Cleveland and Miss Hersey's in Boston and took special courses at Western Reserve University. On November 14, 1905, she married Roger Griswold Perkins and they had four sons: Charles Brush, Roger Griswold, Maurice and John Morris Perkins.

In 1910 she was appointed to a special committee of the Anti-Tuberculosis League. In 1916-18 she was chairwoman of the Women's Suffrage League, and instrumental in founding the Women's City Club.

Apart from her social work, she had a variety of other interests. During 1920-22 she studied aesthetic dancing in New York. She was an accomplished pianist and one of the founders of the Amateur Musical Club.

She travelled extensively, climbing the Jungfrau, making a caravan trip into the Sahara Desert, and a wagon trip into Death Valley, climbing in the Panamint Range while there. Out of her desert journeys came two books, *The White Heart of Mojave*, and *A Red Carpet on the Sahara*. She also wrote much poetry.

Endowed with a natural talent for the fine arts, she studied painting and undoubtedly would have attained a high reputation in this field. Her paintings were hung in the spring exhibitions of the Cleveland Museum of Art, receiving honorable mention in 1928 and 1929. During World War I, she was a public speaker on food conservation and Liberty Loan drives.

THE SHADOW *of the* ARROW

☙

Our two authors had much in common. Each had come from a prominent eastern family. They had been active in politics and the cause of women's suffrage; Perkins in Ohio, and Long—with her companion, Anne Martin—in Nevada. They had each worked to provide aid to tubercular women, organizing hospitals and day camps.

But their procedures in exploring and writing in no way resembled each other. To understand Edna Brush Perkins' modus operandi we must retreat to the middle of the 19th Century. This was the time of the "gentlemen adventurers," usually young men of good families, who could afford to underwrite a year's travel in the Far West, or Africa, or India. Here they would enjoy themselves, partaking of adventures and excitements, before returning to the old home to settle down in a counting house or a law firm. Many would on their return write accounts of their journeys.

In this format is Perkins' *The White Heart of Mojave*, a story based on a short scouting trip, followed the next year by but a single month in Death Valley—but what a month! We may call her and Jordan "gentlewomen adventurers."

Dr. Margaret Long's book is an entirely different work. It is basically a history of the emigrants of 1849, who suffered as they attempted a shortcut from Utah to the gold mines of California. Long extensively researched the literature as it was available in the 1920-30s. But she was not an armchair explorer. Long traced the routes on the ground, even though she was forced to drive into relatively unexplored lands, a perilous task. Her book consists of eight chapters and eleven appendices. Most of the latter are early reports that Long was able to assemble in her work. We shall briefly review each chapter, before reporting in detail on her trips in an attempt to locate the elusive "Last Camp". This spot in central Nevada was the last one where the various parties were to be

together before splitting into various groups as they attempted to solve that problem into which their eagerness to reach the gold fields had led them.

Prologue

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The Prologue is entitled "An Automobile Trip in Death Valley, 1921." This was not Margaret Long and Anne Martin's first visit to this region. In 1912, while campaigning for Nevada's Equal Suffrage, Martin had addressed a small crowd from the rear platform of a rail car at Rhyolite. Together they had returned to Beatty in 1918 during Martin's campaign for the office of United States Senator. Now, in contrast with Perkins' rambling, but delightful story, Long presents us with an accurate log.

After a two-day drive from Reno to Beatty (330 miles), arriving there 4:00 p.m., on Oct. 27, 1921, they gassed up, took on additional supplies and headed for the ghost town of Rhyolite. Spending but few moments here, they continued south across a broad plain. Darkness overtook them and they camped alongside the road, with a sagebrush campfire.

After a breakfast of coffee and doughnuts, they continued over Daylight Pass, then dropped to Hell Gate Pass, where they could see Death Valley shimmering two thousand feet below them. The road soon forked, with the right fork going to Stovepipe Wells. They took the left fork, which was signed "Furnace Creek 12 miles". It was a rough and rocky road, so an hour was consumed in reaching the ranch. On the way they passed various graves and the ruins of the Harmony Borax Works. After they informed the ranch foreman that they were merely passing through, he suggested that they drive up Furnace Creek canyon to a roadside spring for lunch. After dining, they continued up the wash to the borax camp at Ryan, where Major Boyd received them hospitably. Returning to the Valley to camp, they selected a spot near enough to the ranch for protection, but far enough away for privacy.

The next morning, after breakfast of coffee and stale dough-

nuts, they headed back for Beatty, stopping for a longer visit at Rhyolite, thus ending their first visit.

Long wrote:

> The first trip served not at all to still the Valley's voice which called so irresistibly to us; it only whetted our desire to go back and learn more. Voraciously we poured through every book about it. To me the most interesting are *Death Valley in '49* by William Lewis Manly, and *The White Heart of Mojave* by Edna Brush Perkins. . . . Many times I have gone back, one trip leading to another.

Chapter I

Entitled simply "Death Valley", this is a general description of the Valley, opening with a mention of Indians, prospectors and surveyors. This is followed by a general description of the Valley, its geology and geography. Next a number of the points of interest, such as Scotty's Castle, Titus Canyon and Ubehebe Crater appear. A rather good sketch of the roads to and in the Valley as they were in 1940 is included. Mines and graves are lightly touched on, as is the formation of Death Valley National Monument.

Chapter II

"Lost Mines and Missing Men" is probably the weakest chapter. The lost mines, only two in number, are the Gunsight Lode and the Breyfogle. Missing men are more numerous as Long writes of thirteen who died in or near Death Valley from heat and/or thirst. Some of these have the air of barroom tales: the Russian general who was rescued, but after drinking a large glass of icewater fell dead. Likewise Panamint Tom, who gulped down some corned beef, turned to his wife and remarked: "I think I die", then fell off his horse dead!

Chapter III

In contrast to the above, "Death Valley Revisited, 1925-39" is definitely the most worthy part of the text. By now, hooked on Death Valley, Long and Martin decided to study and trace the route of the '49ers. Starting at Independence Rock, Wyoming, they followed as well as one can on modern roads the pathway of these

pioneers. One of the alternates of the Oregon Trail closely coincides with the trace that many gold-seekers took to Salt Lake City.

Leaving Salt Lake City, the pair cruised south on what is now I-15 to Cedar City. Turning west on UT-56, they crossed into Nevada, now on NV-319, to Panaca. The '49ers had continued a little farther south before turning west, crossing the boundary line at "Mt. Misery," where they picked up US-93 and headed south. About halfway between here and Caliente they crossed the '49ers route. Long wrote:

> The emigrants . . . kept west through what is still the wildest, least frequented, and most desolate region of the United States. It is not wise to explore this country without a guide and even then it is better to make a two-car expedition of it, so that if one car breaks down the other can return to civilization for help.

They decided not to attempt to continue on the '49ers path, but to follow down Pahranagat Valley on US-93 to the Las Vegas Highway, then north on US-95 to Indian Springs for the night. The next day, via NV-156 and 372, they continued to Shoshone, which was to be their base.

Here was a general store, post office and motor camp, which had been brought over the Funeral Mountains from Greenwater by Charley Brown, then the lawman at Greenwater. The Browns had been friends of Anne Martin when she was campaigning for the U.S. Senate. Brown was now the owner of the store, filling station, hotel, and was postmaster, as well as serving as a supervisor of Inyo County. In 1938, he was elected to the California State Senate, where he served almost until his death in 1963.

It was from here in 1928 that they made their first entrada in this isolated county to attempt to locate Last Camp, as the '49ers called it, as it was the last camp before the Bennetts separated from the Jayhawkers and the Briers. Writing:

> It was a two-car expedition. Anne Martin and I drove our own faithful Studebaker, and Charley Brown, with his young son George, piloted us in another "Studie." Our objective was Groom Dry Lake, a possible site of

> Last Camp. We saw it and Emigrant Valley for the first time . . .

Their route was north on Cal-127 to Death Valley Junction, then east on NV-373 to Lathrop Wells. Here they followed tracks up Topopah Wash to Jackass Flats, where a strike in that February [1928] had led to the founding of an instant, and short-lived mining camp named Wahmonie. After lunch they continued east for four miles to Cane Spring. Here they met a couple old prospectors, who directed them to Groom Lake.

> So we went a few miles east to Frenchman's Flat [now a nuclear test site] and turned north through the Joshua trees on the gentle slope of Yucca Pass to Emigrant Valley. Our cars followed the shore of Tippipah Lake . . . crossed a slight rise in the valley and saw ahead of us a white line of alkali, which proved to be our goal, Groom Dry Lake.

They continued on to the Groom Mine for a fine supper, then drove straight south to the motel at Indian Springs.

Later research proved that the "Last Camp" was not at Groom Dry Lake, which the '49ers never saw, but Papoose Dry Lake, eight miles to the south. They had traveled south along the eastern slope of Naquinta Mtns., then looped around the south end of that ridge to reach Papoose. Both lakes lie in the great Emigrant Valley which the '49ers followed down past Ash Meadows, where they turned west to enter Furnace Creek Wash. Unfortunately, the Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range, which later became the Atomic Energy Commission's Test Site, completely closes off this entire region to casual travel.

Returning to Long's text:

> I did not make my next trip to Emigrant Valley until 1937, when my brother and I went with Charley Brown in search of the springs mentioned by the '49ers. It is a lonely region, visited occasionally by prospectors and cattlemen. In the hundred-mile drive from the highway [U.S.-95] . . . to Crystal Spring in Pahranagat Valley, we met not another automobile. . . .
>
> One trip always seems to lead to another. The next

> year, 1938, Anne Martin and I went into Emigrant Valley twice, trying to locate more springs which might have been associated with the '49ers. They were long, all-day trips from our headquarters at Shoshone.

On one trek, they were stuck in a sandy wash, but managed to dig their way out. On another, they broke a rear spring leaf in their faithful Chevy but managed to limp back all the way to Shoshone.

Long and Martin were to continue their explorations into the Monument, traveling many of the side roads in their cars. Many of these trips may now be made by less experienced drivers, while others are fair game for "4-wheelers". It was a bit of surprise to find that she had driven up to Striped Butte, a road that will usually put a few extra dents in the bottom of your oil pan. From there they drove the Goler Canyon road of Charles Manson Family fame. It is now definitely considered to be a jeep road. The author once tried it in his '60 Studebaker Lark, but chickened out.

Chapter IV

From this chapter forward, Long analyzes the various accounts of the '49ers. In Chapter IV, which is entitled "Westward Ho! The Oregon and Old Spanish Trails", Long opens with a tribute to her two favorite '49ers, Juliet Wells Brier and William Lewis Manly. We must feel that Long was a "feminist", but this is not a derogatory remark. She stands up for the proper rights and recognition of the women on this overland trek. This is followed by a description of the route from Independence Rock to Salt Lake, and concludes with excerpts from the "Addison Pratt Journal". Pratt was one of those who continued west with Capt. Hunt.

Chapter V

"The Walker Pass Cutoff" describes the journey from Salt Lake to Death Valley, drawing on accounts by William Lewis Manly and Juliet Brier.

Chapter VI

"Mrs. Brier's Story: Death Valley to Los Angeles" contains annotated transcription of Mrs. Brier's accounts that appeared in the *San Francisco Call* of Dec. 25, 1898 and the *San Francisco Examiner* of Feb. 24, 1901.

Chapter VII

"Manly Guides the Bennett-Arcane Party across the Panamints" is taken from Manly's *Death Valley in '49*. With her knowledge and experience gathered by her trips in Emigrant Valley and adjoining territory, Long is able to supply a valuable analysis of Manly's text.

Chapter VIII

"Good-bye, Death Valley" is an account of the afterlife of these valiant pioneers. It includes a tribute to Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Arcane, who with their picturesque appeal to the imagination, are easily the outstanding figures. These two devoted women patiently endured an all but impossible foot journey over uncharted regions and natural obstacles unparalleled in the United States, persisted through unimaginable hardships, and won bravely through from Death Valley to the safety of the coast settlements. To these two we must add the names of Juliet Brier and Mary Wade, as well as daughters Melissa and Martha Bennett and Almira Wade.

* * * * *

The Shadow of the Arrow was first published in 1941, at which time Long believed that Last Camp had been at Groom Lake. In a preface to the 1950 edition, Long writes: "T. R. Goodwin, Superintendent of the Death Valley National Monument, has told me the latest theories about Manly's trail over the Panamint Mountains. The late William A. Smith, of the Kelly Mine, was the authority on Emigrant Valley. He found evidence that the Last Camp of the '49ers was at Papoose Lake, not as I had supposed, at Groom Lake. The main reason for the second edition of my book is to correct this error."

But Long and Martin need not apologize—their explorations, research and writing mark a high point in Death Valley literature.

Margaret Long

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Margaret Long was born in Boston, Mass., on October 28, 1873. Her father, John Davis Long, served as Governor of Massachusetts, as a member of Congress, and as Secretary of the Navy. She graduated from Smith College, then took her M.D. at Johns Hopkins Univ., in 1903. She was serving her internship at the New York Infirmary when an incipient attack of tuberculosis caused her to move to Denver, Colo., in an attempt to recover her health. She lived there for 52 years. While engaging in general practice, she served as medical director for the Sands House, a home for destitute tubercular women. She retired in 1930.

Long was active in women's suffrage battles and in 1918 campaigned for her friend, Anne Martin, in Nevada when Martin was running for the U.S. Senate.

Early on, she developed an interest in Western history, studying and exploring on the Oregon Trail and the Death Valley '49er expedition. Her research in Death Valley lore occupied her from 1921 to 1935. From this came *The Shadow of the Arrow*. For her historical research she received citations from the State Historical Society of Colorado and the Oregon Trail Memorial Association.

After her death on August 31, 1957, Long's research material was bequeathed to the Univ. of Colorado, where it is housed in the Margaret Long Collection.

Anne Martin

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Anne Martin was born in Empire, Nevada on Sept. 30, 1875. Her parents were William O'Hara Martin and Louise Stadtmuller Martin. Moving to Reno in 1883, she attended the Bishop Whittaker School and entered Nevada State University. Martin completed her education at Stanford Univ., receiving her AB in 1896 and an

MA in History the following year. Returning to Reno she taught at Nevada State University for five years before she moved to England where she became involved in the English suffrage campaign. Back in Reno, she joined the Nevada Equal Franchise Society, and became president in 1912. Under her leadership, the women's suffrage amendment was passed in 1913-14. From 1914-18, she worked at a national level to secure nationwide suffrage. In 1918 and again in 1920, she ran for the U.S. Senate, finishing third each time. She was the first woman in the country to run for that office.

This was not her only first, as she was Nevada's first woman tennis champion, and the first head of Nevada State University's history department. In between projects she accompanied her friend Margaret Long on her Death Valley jaunts.

Martin died in April 1951, in Carmel, Calif., where she lived part time following her political defeat in 1920. She remained active in women's rights and pacifist movements during this 30-year span.

—SAGEBRUSH PRESS COLLECTION

From the prospectus of *White Heart of Mojave*.

DEATH VALLEY '49ERS
MEMBER